

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**DESCRIPTIONOVEN RACKCross-reference to a Related Application

The subject application is a continuation-in-part of co-pending application serial no. 09/782,232, filed February 12, 2001 which is a continuation-in-part of serial no. 09/567,662, filed May 9, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,205,997.

Background of the Invention

[0001] The convenience of free delivery often makes ordering a pizza a more attractive alternative than making one at home. The availability of gourmet and professional equipment, such as pizza stones, however have made preparing an authentic pizzeria-style pizza at home a possibility. A pizza stone cooks the pizza evenly providing a continuous source of heat and the stone absorbs moisture to provide a crispy crust.

[0002] Pizza stones are flat having no lip or edge to grab when removing the stone from the oven. Thus, in order to remove a stone, or any other flat item, from an oven, it is necessary to pull the rack out of the oven, reach behind the stone and push the edge of the stone over the lip of the oven rack, and then push the rack back into the oven before grabbing the stone. When the rack is pulled out of the oven, it is only partially supported and can tilt either falling from the oven or dumping its hot contents onto the floor. Additional safety concerns arise when, at home, children and animals are underfoot.

[0003] Oven shelves have been designed to address a number of problems encountered in cooking and baking in an oven. For example, Ogg *et al.* (U.S. 5,938,968) describe a retractable shelf for a microwave oven to assist the cook in accessing foods which have to be turned or stirred while cooking. Slaughter (U.S. Patent No. 2,806,467) describes an oven shelf with an insulated handle so the rack can be removed without donning an oven mitt. Hanson *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 1,941,301) describe a tray holder which facilitates withdrawal of a tray from the oven and allows the raising and